



BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK THROUGH ACHIEVEMENT GOAL THEORY

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Abstract

This dissertation was written as part of the MSc in Management at the International Hellenic University.

The present study will aim at examining how an organization can use achievement goal theory in order, not only to motivate the employee, but also to build positive personal relationships among supervisors and employees and among employees in the workplace. The study will be conducted in private companies in Greece.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the problem

Interpersonal relations at work is a field of great importance in academic literature and in everyday organizational practice, given the fact that on the one hand these relations help employees to find a social purpose and on the other they play a significant role in job satisfaction, turnover intention, physical and mental health of employees and finally in the achievement of organizational goals (Stoetzer, 2010; Reich and Hershcovis, 2011). Overall, positive interpersonal relationships at the workplace are associated with increased work-related outcomes, employees' fulfillment of their 'need to belong', and positive employee performance (Heaphy and Dutton, 2008; Stoetzer, 2010; Reich and Hershcovis, 2011; Obakpolo, 2015). Given the importance of positive interpersonal relationships in an organization, a crucial question is how these relations can be enhanced and improved. Within this context, Maehr (2008) argues that motivation through goal achievement is related to social psychology, and that is subjected to interpersonal interactions, which can either facilitate or damage the tasks that should be accomplished. Hence, achievement goal theory may be a factor that can help in building positive interpersonal relations at the workplace.

Achievement goal theory is related to the kind of goals that lead towards behaviours that are associated with achievements (Maehr and Zusho, 2009). In addition, this theory is related more to the understanding of why individuals try to achieve a goal and less with what they try to achieve; achievement goals are similar to motives, hence the need for achievement, and for this reason goals create motivational systems (Maehr and Zusho, 2009). Goal achievement is based on personal competence, which leads to the existence of two goal categories: task and ego (Nicholls, 1989), or else mastery and performance (Dweck and Leggett, 1988; Elliot and McGregor, 2001). The first category (task / mastery) refers to one's perceived competence and for this reason focuses on self-improvement, self-development, and

continuous effort. The second category (ego / performance) refers to the relation between one's performance and the performance of other people, namely the demonstration of one's competence based on one's superior performance over others. Based on this distinction, one could assume that the first category is associated more with positive attitude towards putting effort in order to achieve a goal, and towards learning, whereas the second category is associated more with the selection of easy tasks and competition among people.

Within this framework, an interesting question can be posed: how goal achievement theory can help in building positive interpersonal relationships in the workplace? Since interpersonal interactions may have either positive or negative impact upon goal achievement, it is interesting to examine the opposite direction in this bilateral relationship, namely how interpersonal relationships in the work environment can be strengthened through the implementation of goal achievement theory. Besides, there is not such a research in the international literature, and especially in the Greek context. One more reason that stimulated this research is the ongoing debate about the element of performance goals, since some researchers propose that it is associated to the desire to demonstrate competence, while others believe that it is the desire to outperform others (Senko et al., 2011). Hence, based on this controversy existing, the impact of performance goals upon building interpersonal relationship may differ.

1.2 Aim of the research and research objectives

The present study will aim at examining how an organization can use achievement goal theory in order, not only TO enhance the achievement of organizational goals, but also to motivate the employee, and to build positive personal relationships among supervisors and employees and among employees in the workplace. The research objectives are the following:

1. To explore the impact of interpersonal relationships in the workplace upon goal achievement.

2. To examine how task / ego goals help in the formation of stronger and more positive interpersonal relationships in the workplace.
3. To examine how mastery / performance goals help in the formation of stronger and more positive interpersonal relationships in the workplace.

1.3 Contribution of the research and expected outcomes

The competition among employees in the current workplace is fierce: employees should demonstrate their superior performance in order to remain in a job position, to find a new, or to be promoted to a better one. For this reason, they have the motive to achieve more (difficult) goals compared to other employees. However, this competition leads sometimes towards a negative work environment, with poor interpersonal relationships among the employees, which in turn it may constitute a threat to the viability of the organisation and the achievement of the organizational goals. For this reason, it is of great interest to examine if and how goal achievement can be used in order to boost interpersonal relations. The study will be conducted in private companies in Greece. The focus on Greek companies derives from the fact that these companies try to survive in the negative economic environment in Greece and be adapted to the changes in the international market, at the same time.

1.4 Structure of the dissertation

The first chapter constituted the introduction of the dissertation, through the definition of the main problem, the aim and research objectives, as well as the contribution and the expected outcomes of the research. The second chapter constitutes the literature review. In this chapter, the concept and importance of interpersonal relations at the workplace, the achievement goal theory and its association with personal interactions at work are discussed. The third chapter presents the method and methodological instrument used in this research, the sample of the research, and the research procedure. The next chapter presents the outcomes of the statistical analysis, hence the results of the present study. The fifth and last chapter of the dissertation summarizes the main points of the research,

discusses the findings in accordance to the literature review, make suggestions for practical implications, discusses the contribution of the findings to the existing knowledge and make suggestions for further research, in relation to the outcomes and the restrictions of the present study.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Interpersonal relations at workplace

2.1.1 The concept of interpersonal relations at workplace

There is a difficulty in defining the term 'interpersonal relation', since no common and strict definition can be given. According to Obakpolo (2015, p. 116), "interpersonal relationship is the social association, connection or affiliation between two or more people", whereas according to Reich and Hershcovis (2011, p. 5), interpersonal relationship is defined "as an individual's subjective experience of repeated interaction or connection with another individual". What should be mentioned, is that relationships are the core of life existence: "relationships with other humans are both the foundation and the theme of the human condition: We are born into relationships, we live our lives in relationships with others, and when we die, the effects of our relationships survive in the lives of the living, reverberating throughout the tissue of their relationships" (Berscheid, 1999, as cited in Ragins and Dutton, 2006, p. 5).

With reference to the workplace, interpersonal relationships can be defined at an individualistic and at an organizational perspective. From an individualistic perspective, these relationships refer to how each person perceive them, while from an organizational perspective, they refer primarily to how the organisation deals with and affect them (Stoetzer, 2010). Based on the analysis of Stoetzer (2010), interpersonal relationships at the workplace include the following aspects:

- Social support: it refers to helpful social interactions, such as feedback, appreciation, emotional support
- Organizational justice: it refers to how fair the organisation as a whole (e.g. superiors) treats employees
- Relational justice: it refers to the relation between employees and managers

This relationship is based on the concept of 'take and give', meaning that each person has specific expectations from another with whom he / she has a relation and on the basis of these expectations and what one takes, then one devotes time and

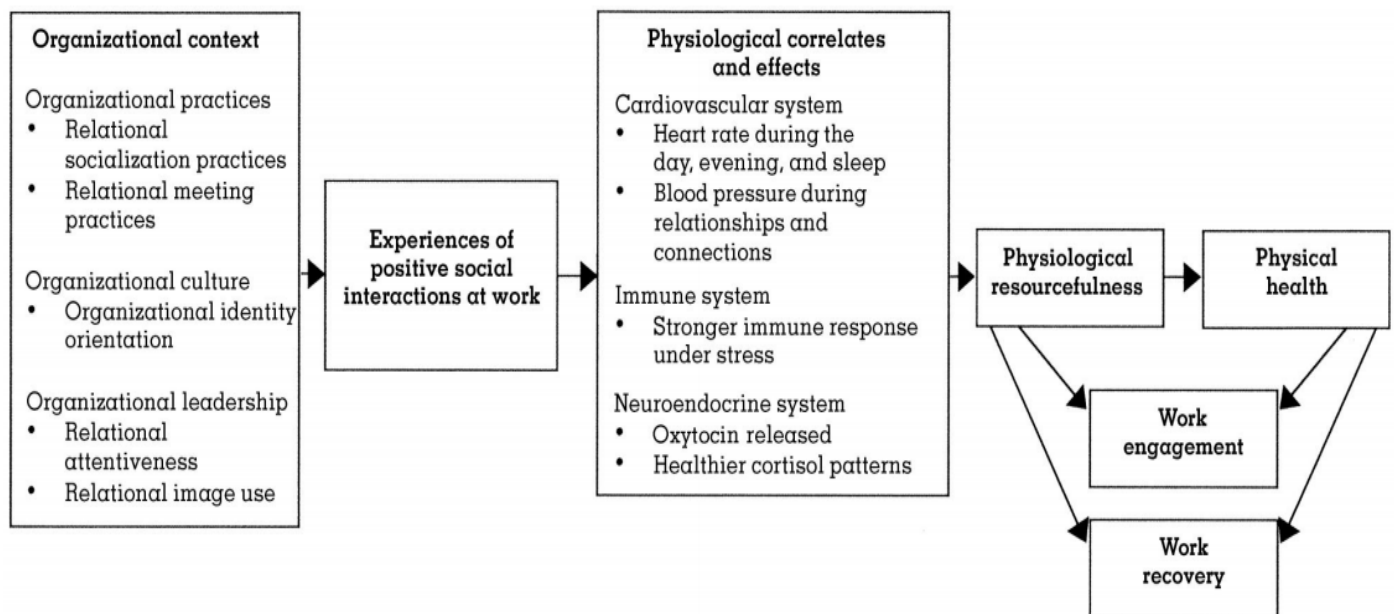
energy in this relation. In addition, these relations are characterized by specific emotions and feelings (Obakpolo, 2015). Hence, one can understand the positive effects of positive interpersonal relations in one's psychological and mental health. What is more, since these relations are the core of each team, one can reach to the conclusion that they are the basis of team formation in every organization, which is crucial for the achievement of organizational goals, as it is going to be discussed in the next section.

2.1.2 The significance of interpersonal relations at workplace

Social interactions and well-being

Interpersonal relations at workplace have significant consequences not only to the employee, but also to the organisation, since employees' performance depends on their ability to interact with colleagues, subordinates, and superiors (Obakpolo, 2015). In general, interpersonal relations have an effect on both individual and organizational level. Positive relationships are associated with life satisfaction, as well as personal development and growth (Ragins and Dutton, 2006). More precisely, the existence of such positive relations at workplace can decrease employees' stress levels (Reich and Hershcovis, 2011). On the contrary, when there are negative interpersonal relationships at the workplace, employees may feel stressed, anxiety, and depressed (Stoetzer, 2010). The positive effects upon psychological health, such as better immune system and lower rates of cardiovascular diseases, cannot be underestimated (Heaphy and Dutton, 2008). The following figure illustrates the effects of positive personal interactions at the workplace upon employee health and well-being. As it can be seen, the overall organizational context influence the experiences of positive social interactions at work, as they are perceived by the members of the organisation, which in turn have effect upon their well-being.

Figure 1. The physiology of positive social interactions at work



Source: Heaphy and Dutton, 2008, p. 139

In addition, positive interpersonal interactions at the workplace fulfill the human need of social belonging (Reich and Hershcovis, 2011). As it was stated earlier, interpersonal reactions are the basis of team creation in an organisation. Human beings as social beings, need discussion, talking with other people, sharing their feelings, emotions, ideas, perceptions, whereas they also have the need for a trustworthy and honest feedback (Obakpolo, 2015). Frequent and non-aversive interactions that happen within a stable and enduring relationship are those criteria that satisfy the human need to belong, which in turn is a crucial motivation factor (Reich and Hershcovis, 2011). This may have positive impact at the workplace, where people should work, alone and with each other, in order to have increased performance and achieve the organizational goals. From this point of view, the existence of positive interactions may motivate employees to work more and better, contributing to organizational success.

Social interactions and work-related outcomes

Further, positive interpersonal interactions result in increased job satisfaction, job commitment and decreased turnover intention on behalf of the employees, since there is a happy and positive atmosphere at the workplace (Newman, 2007;

Chiaburu and Harrison, 2008; Zagenczyk et al., 2010; Reich and Hershcovis, 2011; Obakpolo, 2015). The above mentioned result in increased engagement and perceived organizational support (Morrison, 2009; Obakpolo, 2015). When people do not feel dissatisfied from their job in terms of interpersonal relations, they are more willing to work, which leads towards increased performance and job-related outcomes (Heaphy and Dutton, 2008; Reich and Hershcovis, 2011).

Within the context of teams, in the case of positive interpersonal relations, the members of the team can communicate in an open way, which may yield significant positive results in terms of creativity, innovative ideas, conflict resolution, creation of organizational culture, problem solving, and strategy formation (Ragins and Dutton, 2006; Stoetzer, 2010; Reich and Hershcovis, 2011; Obakpolo, 2015). As a result, teams can lead to organizational success, through advances, new ideas, organizational culture, team cohesion, and achievement of organizational goals.

Overall, “relationships represent not only the essence of meaning in people’s lives, but they also reside deep in the core of organizational life; they are the means by which work is done and meaning is found in organizations” (Ragins and Dutton, 2006, p. 4). The effects of positive interpersonal relations on both the individuals and the organisation are listed in the table below.

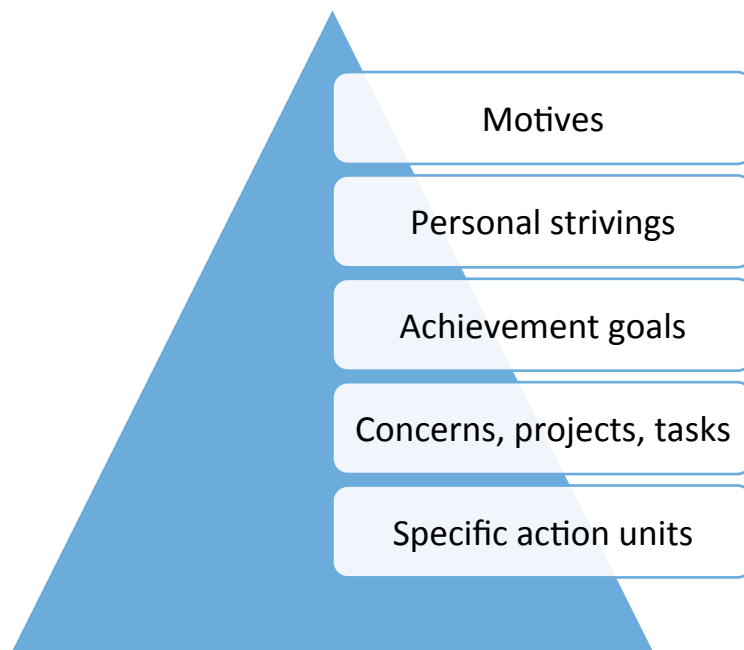
Table 1. Summary of the effects of positive interpersonal relations at the workplace

For the individual	For the organisation
Better physical health	Job commitment
Better mental health	Team cohesion
Job satisfaction	Creativity and innovation
Decreased turnover intention	Decreased organizational conflicts
Improved performance	Improved performance

2.2 Achievement goal theory

Goal theory suggests that the concept of 'goals' is what gives meaning in an activity or purpose, since a goal is what a person tries to achieve through an activity; this means that goal serves as a means of stimuli. Hence, "achievement goal theory specifies the kinds of goals (purposes or reasons) that direct achievement-related behaviors" (Maeh and Zusho, 2009, p. 77). According to Avery et al. (2015, p. 56), "achievement Goal Theory proposes that individuals engage in behaviour with a competence-specific purpose. This purpose, an achievement orientation, thus describes the pattern of cognition and action that results from pursuing various goals". These orientations reflect more trait-like motivational characteristics, instead of personality-based characteristics. This theory does not place emphasis upon what persons try to achieve, rather upon why they try to achieve something, a specific goal, and for this reason goals are related to motives. More precisely, motivation refers to "the reasons underlying behavior", "the attribute that moves us to do or not to do something" (Lai, 2011, p. 4). These reasons are the goals, according to goal theory, and thus they may constitute a distinctive category, separated from the simple motives, as it is depicted in the following figure, illustrating the hierarchical model of goals.

Figure 2. Hierarchical model of goals



Source: Maeh and Zusho, 2009, p. 78

Several assumptions underlie achievement goal theory, according to the analysis of Maeh and Zusho (2009). These assumptions are presented hereunder.

First assumption – Motivation as a process: the theoretical basis of achievement goal theory is social-cognitive, placing emphasis upon the motives as factors leading to goal adoption, and upon behaviours, as factors leading to specific activities. In addition, this theory takes into account the wider multicultural environment in which a person lives and how this environment affects one's behaviours and motives. In general, achievement goal theory focuses on the in depth understanding of the personal and contextual factors that are related to a person's achievement(s). Within this framework, motivation is regarded as a primary factors engaging in goal setting and the process that results in achievement.

Second assumption – Competence is the cornerstone of goal theory: according to this theory, the goal of achievement behaviour is competence, which refers to the ability of a person to deal with effectiveness with his / her environment, based on the skills and abilities that has been developed. This can be better understood through the two major goals promoted through this theory. The first is mastery, or else task-involved goals, which are oriented towards competence's development.

This means that through both effort and hard work one can develop his / her competence and master his / her goals (achieve mastery). For this reason, emphasis is placed not on the outcome, but on the progress made, which is measured either in terms of the individual, or in terms of the individual compared with other persons. The second is performance, or else ego-involved goals, which are related to the demonstration of competence, i.e. a person tries to prove others that is capable of doing something. Hence, it is measured mostly in terms of comparison with other people, and subsequently the ego of a person is of great importance.

Third assumption – Goals create motivational systems: this is based on the fact that each goal is different from others, and thus it stimulates different emotions and thoughts, resulting in different behaviour. Within this context, goals are the underlying factor of motivation, given the fact that motivational systems theory “specifies how personal goals including goal orientations are related to cognitive and emotional arousal processes” (p. 80). In fact, motives lead towards specific cognitive strategies, adaptive schemes, and self-regulation.

Fourth assumption – Goals and self-related processes are intertwined: goals are related to specific self-representations, or even how persons regard themselves, not only in the present and in relation to other people, but also in the future, based on their wishes, needs, thoughts and beliefs.

What should be mentioned, however, is that there are different perspectives of achievement goal theory according to the researchers. A very good description of the various theoretical models and the role of performance goals is given by Maehr and Zusho (2009, p. 83) for example, Ames (1988, 1992) and Harackiewicz (1998, 2001, 2002) proposed a two-goal theoretical model (mastery and performance) but there is a difference in the role of the performance goals, since the first supports that the performance approach emphasize social comparative processes, whereas the second can be used in the case the focus is on outperforming others. The same model was proposed also by Maehr (1986, 1991, 1996), with the difference that in this case, the performance goals are more likely to heighten negative self-

perceptions. On the contrary, Dweck (1988) proposed a two-goal model combining learning and performance, where performance does not fit well in cases of low intelligence and low perceptions of competence. A different two-goal model was proposed also by Nicholls (1984, 1990), consisting of task- and ego-involved goals, which are more likely to lead to ability attribution. Midgley (1996, 2001) developed a three-goal model (mastery, performance-approach and performance-avoidance), where the cost of endorsing performance goals outweighs any potential benefits. Finally, Elliot (1999, 2003, 2005) and Pintrich (2000) developed a three and four-goal model (mastery-approach, mastery-avoidance, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance), which can be useful in cases the focus is on outperforming others. The above analysis indicates that there are different theoretical perspectives with regard to achievement goal theory, depending on the context examined.

Based on the above-mentioned perspectives regarding achievement goal theory, it can be concluded that there are two approaches: person-approach and situation-approach. Within the framework of person-approach, there is a link between motives and achievement goals, while at the same time there are two achievement motives: motive to succeed (mastery goals, performance-approach) and motive not to fail (performance-avoidance). In the situation-approach, the goals are related more to the situation and not the individual. Performance-oriented goals are more likely to be adopted in the case of social comparison or competition. The distinction between mastery and performance goals in the framework of approach and avoidance leads to the assumption that a person can adopt two goals at the same time. From the table above one can see that there are three different models:

- a) two-goal model: focuses on mastery approach (learning and understanding) and performance approach (maintenance of favourable judgments). These goals are possible to be adopted at the same time
- b) three-goal model: the person adopts multiple goals: mastery-approach (a person focuses on learning and understanding), performance-approach (a person focuses on outperforming others), and performance-avoidance (a person tries not be incompetent compared to others)

c) four-goal model: mastery-approach (a person focuses on learning and understanding and do better compared to the past), mastery-avoidance (a person focuses on not losing skills / competence and to do worse than in the past), performance-approach (a person focuses on outperforming others), and performance-avoidance (a person tries not be incompetent compared to others and not to be worse than other people).

Overall, achievement goal theory focuses on two goals: mastery and performance. Mastery is related to the acquisition and development of competence, whereas performance is related to demonstration of skills and competencies and outweigh other people. Thus, mastery goals is based on the achievement of task-based or self-defined criteria. Both mastery and performance goals can be distinguished into approach or avoidance. This means that performance-approach and mastery-approach goals are related to extrinsic goals, whereas mastery-avoidance and performance-avoidance goals are related to intrinsic goals.

2.3 Interpersonal relations and achievement goal theory

Achievement goal theory was primarily developed in relation to classroom settings (Van Yperen and Orehek, 2013). However, this theory can also be used in order to explain the choices and behaviours adopted by employees in the workplace, in order to create specific cognitive and behavioural frameworks for understanding, interpreting and responding to their working environment. Within this framework, this theory can be used in order to examine the building of positive interpersonal relation. Achievement goal theory incorporates both the intrapersonal standard (the self) and the interpersonal standard (others). Performance-based goals are related more to the interpersonal standard, since they are linked to how one defines his / her success and achievements in terms of other's people performance. On the contrary, mastery-goals that are related to intrinsic motivation, is associated with the intrapersonal standard (Van Yperen and Orehek, 2013).

Interpersonal relations may be related to the achievement goal theory since they are “a part of achievement motivation of individual belief system” (Liao and Hsieh, 2017, p. 33). A good leader in an organization who is characterized by good interpersonal relations may internalize some of his / her subordinates’ beliefs and values, whereas this leader is more willing and able to motivate employees. Hence, interpersonal relationships, as a self-system process, lead towards affiliation and motivation, supporting organizational goals (Liao and Hsieh, 2017). In addition, Martin and Dowson (2009) support that interpersonal relationships affect directly one’s beliefs and emotions related to motivation.

More precisely, social interactions are important, since they govern one’s belonging in a social group of people. This means that people need to belong in a social group and for this reason they are willing to adopt behaviours that will allow them to form interpersonal relations (Martin and Dowson, 2009; Reich and Hershovich, 2011). More precisely, based on the social environment of a person and one’s willingness and effort to become a member of a particular group, as in the case of a workplace environment, specific beliefs and values are developed. These beliefs and values drive an individual’s behaviour and orient him / her towards the achievement of specific goals. Apart from this, it is possible for an individual not only to learn and adopt the necessary beliefs and values, but also to internalize those that are highly valued by other people who are regarded as significant (e.g. the leader). The result is that beliefs become an integral part of one’s belief system, leading towards the development of new ways of behaviour and action, or even the transfer of these beliefs to other settings (e.g. other social groups). Thus, the individual fulfill his / her need for belongingness, which result in positive emotional responses. These responses in turn have a positive impact upon one’s overall achievement behaviour, as for example one’s response to new challenges, the use of specific strategies in the workplace, self-regulation, and participation in tasks (Martin and Dowson, 2009).

Based on the above and what have been discussed in a previous section about interpersonal relations, employees who have built positive interpersonal relationships in their workplace have more positive feelings towards their work in

general, have better mental health and intellectual functioning, whereas they are characterized by high levels of self-esteem and self-worth. For this reason, they are more able and willing to take part in more challenging tasks, are characterized by higher communication skills, are more cooperative and supportive to others (e.g. provide help, facilitate processes), they do not resist in forming groups that are characterized by cohesion, one major feature for group effectiveness, are more self-determined and focus on self-actualisation (since the goal of belongingness is fulfilled they orient themselves to the fulfillment of higher goals) (Heaphy and Dutton, 2008; Martin and Dowson, 2009; Reich and Hershovich, 2011).

In general, two conclusions can be drawn from the above discussion. The first is that in an effort to be member of a social group, people tend to adopt beliefs and values that on the one hand help them to develop the appropriate behaviours and on the other can be transferred to other settings, having an impact on the overall behaviour of people in their lives in other situations. The second is that positive interpersonal relationships can lead towards an overall positive and increased performance at the workplace, the creation of a positive organizational culture, and the formation of effective groups of people, leading to the achievement of organizational goals, the better mental and intellectual health, and the improved employee performance. From the above it can be argued that positive interpersonal relationships result in better individual- and work-related outcomes (Martin and Dowson, 2009; Reich and Hershovich, 2011).

In both cases, interpersonal relations can affect one's emotions, beliefs, values and behaviours, which may lead towards increased motivation and hence achievement, or even the effort to avoid failures that can lead to undesirable situations, as for example lack of or negative interpersonal relations. Within this context, an employee may focus on the achievement of goals (either by affirming competence-mastery goals, or by demonstrating superiority-performance goals) for social reasons, such as becoming a member of a group of people in the workplace, or forming positive relations with the leader, or obtaining approval by specific employees of higher ranking. Hence, the building of interpersonal relations may be the cause of goal

achievement, or may be the outcome of goal achievement at the same time. All the above are summarized in the following table, which depicts the six theories related to the achievement goal theory and how they are linked to interpersonal relationships.

Table 2. Relation between achievement goal theory and interpersonal relations

Theory	Key concepts	Link to interpersonal relations
Attribution theory	Perceived causes of an event or outcome shape behavior, affect, and cognition; key causal ascriptions – control, locus, stability	Perceived causes learnt or inferred from significant others; dimensions such as control shaped by feedback from others
Expectancy-value theory	Positive expectations and high value placed on task or outcome enhances motivation	Socializers' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors communicate level of expectation and nature of value
Goal theory	Reasons for engaging in a particular behavior or pursuing a particular goal	Communicated through others' values, expectations, and group Norms
Self-determination theory	Relatedness a psychological need	Relatedness need met through warmth, support, and nurturance
Self-efficacy	Relatedness a psychological need	Modeled and communicated by significant others; vicarious influence from others

Self-worth theory	motivation	Link between worth and achievement; fear of failure	Relationships (approval, affirmation) conditional on level of achievement; specific response to fear of failure linked to how significant others respond
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Source: Martin and Dowson, 2009, p. 35

CHAPTER 3. METHOD

3.1 Research method

The quantitative research method was chosen for this study. This research method focuses on the collection of numerical data and the generalization of results in the wider population that has the same characteristics as the sample of research (Sibanda, 2009). This choice was based on the fact that this method allows statistical analysis and numerical presentation of participants' perceptions through their quantification, providing a more specific and objective picture of these views compared to qualitative research (Muijs, 2004). Overall, it is argued that the purpose of quantitative analysis is to discover the causes of change in social phenomena through objective measurement and numerical analysis (Papageorgiou, 2014).

A second reason that led to the decision to choose this research method is the fact that it offers a high level of objectivity on behalf of the researcher and therefore a high level of reliability compared to qualitative research (Johnson and Christensen, 2008). In addition, quantitative research has been chosen since the goal of this research is to give answers to specific research questions that primarily concern how variables are affected, namely how interpersonal relations are related to achievement goals, which can be achieved through quantitative research (Dawson, 2009).

3.2 Research instrument

For the purposes of this research the questionnaire was chosen as the methodological instrument for the collection of data. This instrument is the most widely-used instrument in quantitative research (Taylor, 2004). In addition, questionnaire has numerous advantages: a) it is very easy to be distributed and collected, since it can be completed by the participants in the research themselves (Dawson, 2009); b) it allows the collection of data from a widespread sample in

terms of geographical disparity (Cresweel, 2011); c) it allows the statistical analysis of data and the quantification of the respondents' opinion (Dawson, 2009).

The questionnaire that was used in this research has been designed by the researcher on the basis of the following instruments:

a) the Achievement Goal Questionnaire-Revised (AGQ-R) designed by Elliot and Murayama (2008): it consists of 12 items, measured in a Likert-scale as follows: 1=strongly disagree, 2=strongly agree, 3=neither agree or disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

b) some statements taken from the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behaviour (FIRO-B): it consists of 22 items, measured in a Likert-scale as follows: 1=usually, 2=often, 3=sometimes, 4=occasionally, 5=rarely, 6=never

c) In addition, some questions were added, which refer to the demographic profile of the respondents (gender, age, educational level, hierarchical level)

3.3 Sample of the research

Regarding the sample of the research, two issues should be taken into account. The first is the access of the research to the sample. For this reason, the convenient sampling method was used, in order the researcher to be able to recruit the sample needed for this study, in terms of geographical proximity (Cohen et al., 2007). The second issue refers to the number of the sample. Cohen et al. (2007) mention that there is not a specific number of respondents for quantitative research, since this depends primarily upon the access of the researcher to the sample.

The sample of the research consists of employees in various super markets in Thessaloniki. More precisely, the researcher distributed 200 questionnaires to 35 branches of six super markets in the wider region of Thessaloniki. From these, 157 people completed the questionnaire, which means a response rate of 78.5%. The following table depicts the demographic profile of the participants in the research. As it can be seen, the majority of the respondents is males (52.2%), aged between

26-35 years old (24.2%), having completed university education (24.2%), who are employees (28.7%).

Table 3. Demographic profile of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
• Male	82	52,2
• Female	75	47,8
Age		
• Up to 25 years old	24	15,3
• 26-35	38	24,2
• 36-45	29	18,5
• 46-55	32	20,4
• 56-65	34	21,7
Education		
• Primary education	29	18,5
• Secondary education	32	20,4
• Post-secondary education	28	17,8
• University education	38	24,2
• Master / PhD	30	19,1
Hierarchical level		
• Upper level manager	41	26,1
• Middle level manager	32	20,4
• Low level manager / Supervisor	39	24,8
• Employee	45	28,7

3.4 Procedure

At first the researcher addressed to the general directors of the branches of each super market in order to gain their informal consent for the conduct of this research, as it is supported by the ethical guidelines during the process of a research (Dawson,

2009). In order to gain this consent, the researcher informed the general directors about the identity of the researcher, the aim of the study, the voluntary participation of the employees in the research, their anonymity, the non-disclosure of their responses, and that there will be no harm to any of the participants. After gaining their informal consent, the researcher distributed the questionnaires wither himself or through e-mail and he received the questionnaires with the same way.

For the analysis for the data the statistical package Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 was used. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used (Bluman, 2012). Descriptive statistics were used in order to depict the sample of the research, as well as the descriptive statistics of the respondents' opinions. Inferential statistics were used in order to examine the relationship between achievements and interpersonal relationships.

CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS

4.1 Descriptive statistics

The following table presents the descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) of the respondents' opinions about statements related to achievement goal theory. As it can be seen, the respondents tend to disagree, or be neutral, to the statements that are related to achievements. More precisely, they do not agree or disagree with the statement that their goal is to perform better than the other employees ($M=3.16$, $SD=1.394$), their aim is to avoid learning less than they possibly could ($M=3.10$, $SD=1.465$), to avoid learning less than it is possible to learn ($M=3.09$, $SD=1.499$), to avoid an incomplete understanding of tasks in their job ($M=3.06$, $SD=1.424$) and to avoid performing worse than others ($M=3.02$, $SD=1.318$). In addition, they tend to disagree with the fact that their aim is to perform well relative to other employees ($M=2.87$, $SD=1.418$). These results indicate that the employees do not seek to perform well, they do not aim at performing well in relation to other employees, and in general they are not oriented towards increased levels of achievement.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of respondents' opinions about achievement goal

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
My aim is completely master the tasks involved in my job	157	2,89	1,481
I am striving to do well compared to other employees	157	2,90	1,422
My goal is to learn as much as possible	157	2,89	1,333
My aim is to perform well relative to other employees	157	2,87	1,418
My aim is to avoid learning less than I possibly could	157	3,10	1,468

My goal is to avoid performing poorly compared to others	157	2,89	1,380
I am striving to understand the tasks in my job as thoroughly as possible	157	2,94	1,284
My goal is to perform better than the other employees	157	3,16	1,394
My goal is to avoid learning less than it is possible to learn	157	3,09	1,499
I am striving to avoid performing worse than others	157	3,02	1,318
I am striving to avoid an incomplete understanding of tasks in my job	157	3,06	1,424
My aim is to avoid doing worse than other employees	157	2,96	1,445

The table below presents the descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) of respondents' opinions about interpersonal relations. All the answers of the respondents in the statements depicted vary between 'sometimes' and 'occasionally'. More precisely, the statements with the lower means are the following:

- I try to have close relationships with people (M=3.20, SD=1.797)
- I join social groups (M=3.29, SD=1.669)
- I let other people control my actions (M=3.36, SD=1.660)
- I try to include other people in my plans (M=3.38, SD=1.550)

On the contrary, the statements with the highest means are the following:

- I like people to act distant toward me (M=3.69, SD=1.701)
- I try to have close personal relationships with people (M=3.66, SD=1.704)
- I try to get close and personal with people (M=3.64, SD=1.736)
- I try to have people around me (M=3.62, SD=1.756)

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of respondents' opinions about interpersonal relations

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I try to be with people	157	3,54	1,685
I let other people decide what to do	157	3,45	1,781
I join social groups	157	3,29	1,669
I try to have close relationships with people	157	3,20	1,797
I tend to join social organisations when I have the opportunity	157	3,64	1,649
I let other people strongly influence my actions	157	3,64	1,618
I try to be included in informal social activities	157	3,48	1,678
I try to have close personal relationships with people	157	3,66	1,704
I try to include other people in my plans	157	3,38	1,550
I let other people control my actions	157	3,36	1,660
I try to have people around me	157	3,62	1,756
I try to get close and personal with people	157	3,64	1,736
When people are doing things together I tend to join them	157	3,46	1,670
I am easily led by people	157	3,48	1,723
I try to avoid being alone	157	3,41	1,633
I try to participate in group activities	157	3,42	1,657
I like people to invite me to things	157	3,54	1,738
I like people to act close toward me	157	3,42	1,744
I like people to include me in their activities	157	3,57	1,634
I like people to act distant toward me	157	3,69	1,701
I socialize with my colleagues outside work	157	3,61	1,835
I compete with my colleagues concerning advancement	157	3,43	1,725

4.2 Inferential statistics

In this section it will be examined whether the statements about achievement are related to the statements about interpersonal relations, and whether their opinions are influenced by their hierarchical level. Before proceeding to these examinations, the normality of data will be examined, in order to choose the appropriate test. Kolmogorov-Smirnov was used in order to examine the normality of data. The results are depicted in the following table and we can see that the data do not follow the normal distribution. For this reason, non-parametric tests will be used. For the examination between achievement goals and interpersonal relations, Spearman correlation was used. For the examination of the influence of hierarchical level, since the independent variable has more than two levels, Kruskal-Wallis test was used.

Table 6. Normality of data

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
My aim is completely master the tasks involved in my job	,184	157	,000
I am striving to do well compared to other employees	,171	157	,000
My goal is to learn as much as possible	,175	157	,000
My aim is to perform well relative to other employees	,177	157	,000
My aim is to avoid learning less than I possibly could	,156	157	,000
My goal is to avoid performing poorly compared to others	,178	157	,000
I am striving to understand the tasks in my job as thoroughly as possible	,187	157	,000
My goal is to perform better than the other employees	,173	157	,000
My goal is to avoid learning less than it is possible to	,200	157	,000

learn			
I am striving to avoid performing worse than others	,179	157	,000
I am striving to avoid an incomplete understanding of tasks in my job	,179	157	,000
My aim is to avoid doing worse than other employees	,146	157	,000
I try to be with people	,161	157	,000
I let other people decide what to do	,148	157	,000
I join social groups	,169	157	,000
I try to have close relationships with people	,156	157	,000
I tend to join social organisations when I have the opportunity	,155	157	,000
I let other people strongly influence my actions	,144	157	,000
I try to be included in informal social activities	,132	157	,000
I try to have close personal relationships with people	,128	157	,000
I try to include other people in my plans	,150	157	,000
I let other people control my actions	,165	157	,000
I try to have people around me	,172	157	,000
I try to get close and personal with people	,147	157	,000
When people are doing things together I tend to join them	,160	157	,000
I am easily led by people	,143	157	,000
I try to avoid being alone	,141	157	,000
I try to participate in group activities	,161	157	,000
I like people to invite me to things	,151	157	,000
I like people to act close toward me	,168	157	,000
I like people to include me in their activities	,132	157	,000
I like people to act distant toward me	,165	157	,000
I socialize with my colleagues outside work	,165	157	,000

I compete with my colleagues concerning advancement	,165	157	,000
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At first, the relation between achievements and interpersonal relations was examined. For this reason, Spearman correlation was used. The results depicted in the following table. There is a negative relation between the following statements:

- I join social groups and My aim is completely master the tasks involved in my job ($p=-0.218$)
- I try to be included in informal social activities and My goal is to avoid performing poorly compared to others ($p=-0.173$)
- I try to have people around me and I am striving to avoid performing worse than others ($p=-0.162$)
- I like people to act distant toward me and My goal is to learn as much as possible ($p=-0.176$)

There is a positive relation between the following statements:

- I let other people control my actions and My goal is to avoid learning less than it is possible to learn ($p=0.176$)
- I like people to invite me to things and My aim is to perform well relative to other employees ($p=0.159$)
- I like people to include me in their activities and I am striving to avoid performing worse than others ($p=0.165$)
- I like people to include me in their activities and I am striving to avoid an incomplete understanding of tasks in my job ($p=0.163$)